

original elements, and robbery "becomes more honourable than war, inasmuch as the robber is paid and the soldier in arrear. Then a wonderful ecclesiastical establishment covers the land with a privileged class, who are perpetually producing some effect on society. I say nothing, while writing these lines — which afterwards may be expanded into a picture — of their costume. You are awakened from your slumbers by the *rosario* — the singing procession by which the peasantry congregate to their labours. It is most effective, full of noble chants and melodious responses, that break upon the still fresh air and your even fresher feelings in a manner truly magical.

Oh, wonderful Spain! Think of this romantic land covered with Moorish ruins and full of Murillo! Ah that I could describe to you the wonders of the painted temples of Seville! ah that I could wander with you amid the fantastic and imaginative halls of delicate Alhambra! "Why, why cannot I convey to you more perfectly all that I see and feel? I thought that enthusiasm was dead within me, and nothing could be new. I have hit perhaps upon the only country which could have upset my theory — a country of which I have read little and thought nothing — a country of which indeed nothing has been of late written, and which few visit. I dare to say I am better. This last fortnight I have made regular progress, or rather felt perhaps the progress which I had already made. It is all the sun. Do not think that it is society or change of scene. This, however occasionally agreeable, is too much for me, and even throws me back. It is when I am quite alone and quite still that I feel the difference of my system, that I miss old aches, and am conscious of the increased activity and vitality and expansion of my blood. Write to me whenever you can, always to Malta, from whence I shall be sure to receive my letters sooner or later. If I receive twenty at a time, it does not signify; but write: do not let the chain of my domestic knowledge be broken for an instant. Write to me about Bradenham, about dogs and horses, orchards, gardens, who calls, where you go, who my father sees in London, what is said. This is what I want. Never mind public news, except it be private in its knowledge, or about private friends. I see all newspapers sooner or later. . . . Keep on writing, but don't *bore* yourself. Mind this. A thousand thousand loves to all. Adieu, my beloved. We shall soon meet. There is no place like Bradenham, and each moment I feel better I want to come

back. . . .

B. D.¹

i *Letters*, p. 22.